THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106
TELEPHONE 421-7346

For release: Wednesday, June 12 - p.m.
or after 1968

Taken down 10/14/68

A towering statue of French novelist Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), cast recently from a model exectued by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), was unveiled today immediately inside the South entrance of The Cleveland Museum of Art. Present at the fifteen-minute ceremony were B. Gerald Cantor, who has lent the bronze sculpture from his collection for three months, and Dr. Sherman E. Lee, Director of the Museum. Mr. Cantor is an investment banker in Beverly Hills, California.

The Cantor bronze was cast in France within the past year, the eighth sculpture to come from Rodin's final plaster model of 1898. The artist arrived at the model only after seven years of developing a series of more than forty studies of Balzac. He had been commissioned by the Société des Gens de Lettres (a literary society), headed then by Emile Zola, to create a monument to the great novelist, Balzac. The outcome was the largest of all Rodin individual sculptures; the Balzac towers to a height of nine and a half feet and weighs approximately 1500 pounds.

For each of all Rodin's uncast original works, the French government has allowed twelve bronzes to be made: however, the 1898 Balzac model is so monumental that only eight have been cast, all posthumously, beginning in the 1930's. The study from which they come stands outside the artist's home at Meudon, France. When Rodin had completed it, the Society rejected it as having been influenced by the Italian Impressionist sculptor, M. Rosso, but this opinion is no longer held by Rodin scholars; the sculptor himself considered it his masterpiece --- "The resultant of my whole life, the very pivot of my esthetic theory."